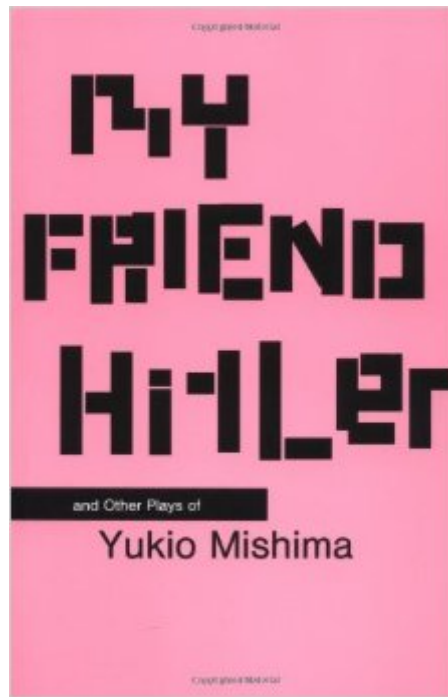


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# My Friend Hitler



## Synopsis

Though best known for his novels, Yukio Mishima published more than sixty plays, almost all of which were produced during his lifetime. Among them are kabuki plays and others inspired by *No* dramas—two types used in classical Japanese theater. Of play-writing Mishima once observed, "I started writing dramas just as water flows toward a lower place. In me, the topography of dramas seems to be situated far below that of novels. It seems to be in a place which is more instinctive, closer to child's play." For English readers, these plays have been one of Japan's best-kept secrets—until now. In this anthology, Hiroaki Sato translates the brilliance and richness of Yukio Mishima's writing into the English language. He has selected five major plays and three essays on dramaturgy, providing informative introductions to guide the reader. Sato's translations offer a broad historical and personal context in which those new to Mishima's work can place his writing. For those more familiar with Mishima, these translations offer another medium in which one can access his ingenious work.

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## Customer Reviews

Imagine the final play in this book coming after a summary of the original tale in which an ancient imperial family has surpassed Freud in arranging family relationships: "Sutoku (1119-64)—officially the first son of Retired Emperor Toba (1103-56) but actually a son of Toba's father, Retired Emperor Shirakawa (1053-1129) because Shirakawa made Shoshi pregnant after he married her to his

son--was installed as emperor when he was four, but was tricked into retirement by Toba in 1141, before ever having a chance to exercise real imperial power. His actual father, Shirakawa, had started the insei, a political arrangement in which the retired monarch wielded far greater power than the ruling one. . . ." (p. 242). There are a few footnotes in the play 'My Friend Hitler' which remind the reader that the translator is trying to capture the style of German political thought that has been staged in Japan. The footnote on page 133 actually begins with "Here, apparently with tongue in cheek, Mishima commits an improbable cross-cultural anachronism. What Hitler refers to . . ." I find it more ironic when Hitler is perplexed that his secret police are acting like secret police: HITLER: No, you had your own problems. What can you say about the disgusting things the SA did during the last two years? No wonder the Reichswehr was put off. You made hideouts in basements and warehouses; you tortured, kidnapped, demanded ransoms--I've even heard the story that in some districts troopers took their rivals in love affairs into basements, tied them up on the wall, and cut them up. ROEHM: That lasted only a while. It's just that the young men wanted to mimic what secret police do. I've kept them in check and there's been nothing like that since. (pp. 128-129).

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